

Those Mightily Used of God, Part 3 - Acts 19:32-41 - April 26th, 2009

- This is part three of a series titled; "Those Mightily Used of God." We began this study the two weeks prior to resurrection Sunday.
- Woven ever so beautifully into the fabric of the text before us are a number of clues about those whom God can and will use.
- Here Paul will rise from the pages and reveal some common characteristics present in those God will choose to use in mighty ways.

1. They're in tune with the will of God (Verse 21)

- Paul knew that it was both God's will and God's way that he go to Jerusalem, by way of Achaia and Macedonia on his way to Rome.

2. They're open to the help of others (Verse 22)

- The Apostle Paul both relied on and would ask for the help of others. Here Timothy and Erastus were an enormous help to Paul.
- We're told that Paul sent them on ahead to Macedonia, because they had been a help to him and had greatly ministered to him as well.

3. They're not disturbed by disturbances (Verse 23)

- Here were told that it was about this time that there arose a great disturbance about the "Way," which as we'll see escalates into a riot.
- Everywhere Paul went a disturbance would soon follow. Paul not only disturbed, he wasn't disturbed by the disturbances he disturbed.

4. They're not about making money (Verses 24-25)

- Demetrius, a financially successful businessman, starts losing money because of the Paul's preaching, and Paul isn't a bit concerned.

5. They're willing to expose false religions (Verses 26-27)

- In his preaching the Apostle "says that man-made gods are no gods at all," and in speaking the truth, he exposes the lie of Artemis.

6. They're unflinching in their fearlessness (Verses 28-31)

- They're furious begin shouting and a riot starts, and Paul, runs in fear for his life! No, he fearlessly tries to get involved but he's stopped.

7. They're calm in the midst of chaos and confusion (Verses 32-34)

32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. 33 The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. 34 But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

v32 We're told that everyone is thrown into confusion, shouting just to shout, and most of them didn't even know why they were there.

v33-34 Alexander, who's not our friend, tries to silence the people so he can make a defense. It's to no avail, they shout for two hours.

- All the while, Paul, who undoubtedly could hear all of this from outside the theatre, has to calmly, and prayerfully wait as it all plays out.

- As we just read and will soon see, it does play out and God does work it out, but sometimes we have to, like Paul, calmly wait it out.
- When God chooses and uses you for His Kingdom and glory, you will encounter situations that are riddled with chaos and confusion.
- The scene here is one where Paul is seemingly forced to sit still and simply remain calm in the midst of unspeakable uncertainty.

Psalm 46:10-11 10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." 11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. NIV

8. They're willing to let God defend them in His way (Verses 35-36)

35 The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? 36 Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash.

v35-36 The mayor is finally able to quite the crowd by telling them that they don't need to do anything rash because Artemis is their god.

- In other words, he's tells them that Paul and his teachings, are no threat to the undeniable fact that the great Artemis "fell from heaven."
- What's so interesting about this is that God used this pagan mayor to defend His people and preserve the work to which he called them.

"The Lord can rule the raging of the people and preserve his own servants from imminent peril."

Charles Spurgeon

Psalm 35:22-24 22 O LORD, you have seen this; be not silent. Do not be far from me, O Lord. 23 Awake, and rise to my defense! Contend for me, my God and Lord. 24 Vindicate me in your righteousness, O LORD my God; do not let them gloat over me. NIV

- If we as earthly fallen fathers will stop at nothing and do anything to defend our children, how much more will our heavenly Father do it!
- I've heard it said that if I try to defend myself, God will just let me! I would most certainly want for God to defend me in His way.
- God will choose and use those who will let Him defend them. If I start defending myself, then all my time will be spent defending myself.

- I think of Nehemiah; they were able to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem in just 52 days. He wouldn't have done it if he defended himself.
- All these false accusations were made against him about the wall, and there were even death threats against him because of the wall.
- I love how he just let the Lord defend him and deal with his detractors; we have a record of it found in the book of Nehemiah chapter 6.

Nehemiah 6:3 so I sent messengers to them with this reply: "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" NIV

Nehemiah 6:14 Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who have been trying to intimidate me. NIV

9. They're known by what they're for not against (Verses 37-41)

37 You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. 38 If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. 39 If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. 40 As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." 41 After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

v37 We're told Paul and those with him never once took anything from, nor said anything against their temple and their goddess Artemis.

v38-39 He defers the crowd to Demetrius, who started this in the first place, telling them that it's up to him to press charges if he wants.

v40-41 He reminds the crowd that they're in danger of Rome charging them since there's no reason for this riot, then he dismisses them.

- It's important that we notice how, according to verse 37, Paul didn't curse or blaspheme their goddess he only spoke truth about Jesus.
- It's been said that; "it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness." In other words, don't yell against the dark, just turn on the light.
- We can go so far over the top and become known for what we're against that it comes at the expense of being known by Who we're for.
- This is how and why God so mightily used the Apostle Paul there in Ephesus. There was a revival there, and many turned to the Lord.

- This is what happened back in 1901 with the Welsh Revival. God mightily used Robert Murray McChesney who just turned on the light.
- During this great Welsh Revival, every tavern and pub in Wales went broke, and McChesney didn't preach a single anti-alcohol sermon.
- Like with the Apostle Paul here in Ephesus, he wasn't known for being against anyone, he was however, known for being for the Lord.

"This is how we should endeavor to change society. I wish the gospel would affect the trade of London; I wish it might. There are some trades that need affecting, need to be cut a little shorter . . . Not by an Act of Parliament! Let Acts of Parliament leave us alone. We can fight that battle alone. But may it come to an end by the spread of the gospel . . . I have no faith in any reformation that does not come through men's hearts being changed."

Charles Spurgeon